

What are Chinese University students' Views on The LGBT Community and The Responsibility of Educational Leaders to Teach LGBT Issues in Schools?

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Abstract: As a subculture, the LGBT community is characterized by its independence from mainstream culture (Ye, 2018). The existence of the LGBT community as a phenomenon has a long history. However, due to the influence of religious beliefs and mainstream culture, LGBT groups are consciously screened and marginalized in China (Tang & Sun, 2014). The topic of LGBT groups on campus has brought many obstacles to the existing higher education management in China (Qu, 2015). The purpose of this study is to understand the cognition and attitude of Chinese college students towards the LGBT community, understand the characteristics and rules of the LGBT community, and enhance the pertinence and scientific nature of the guidance and management of university leaders. In this paper, the researcher will report on the exploratory research to better understand the current attitudes of Chinese college students toward the LGBT community and highlight the responsibility of school leaders when dealing with people who identify with LGBT issues. The setting for this research will be Chinese universities. Therefore, all participants will be Chinese university students. The first data will be collected through interviews. This study aims to improve the educational environment for LGBT people in Chinese universities and explore the responsibilities that Chinese school leaders should assume.

Keywords: Chinese university students, LGBT community, Responsibility, Educational leaders.

1. Introduction

As a subculture, the LGBT community is distinguished by independence from the dominant culture (Ye, 2018). The existence of the LGBT community as a phenomenon has a long history. Still, due to the influence of religious belief and mainstream culture, homosexuality has been consciously shielded and marginalized (Tang & Sun, 2014). As a subculture, people who are identified as LGBT have distinctive behavioral norms and practices (Li, 2015). With the intensification of reform and opening up, Chinese college students in the era of social transition are experiencing new mental shifts due to the extensive influence of numerous domestic and international ideologies (Liu, Huang & Li, 2018). Some old notions that past generations took for granted may be questioned or even entirely dismissed. A new perspective about the LGBT community is rapidly spreading among the general population in China, and school leaders should be prepared to deal with the change (Wang, 2018). The university setting provides LGBT students with a reasonably liberal living space in China, but the lack of sex education makes this space less than ideal (Ye, 2018). On the one hand, their behaviour will directly impact classmates and roommates in various ways; on the other hand, LGBT students are occasionally excluded from campus (Fu, 2012).

The topic of the LGBT community on campus has presented numerous obstacles to China's existing higher education management (Qu, 2015). This study investigates this topic to comprehend the cognition and attitude of Chinese college students toward THE LGBT community, understand its characteristics and laws, and increase the pertinence and scientific nature of university leaders' instruction and administration. In this paper, I will report on my exploratory research to better understand the present attitudes of Chinese college students toward the LGBT community and highlight

the responsibilities of school leaders when dealing with people who identify as LGBT issues. The context of this study effort will be Chinese universities. As a result, all participants will be university students in China. The first data will be gathered through interviews. This research at improving the educational environment for the LGBT community at Chinese colleges and discuss what responsibilities Chinese school leaders should take.

2. Context

Li (2013) points out that society acquiesces in the phenomenon of the LGBT community; in fact, it is impossible to find a culture that is entirely free of the LGBT community. China's official outward announcement of the number of people who identify as LGBT in China was made for the first time in 2004: comprehensive health sector in our country recently, according to a survey by the Chinese LGBT population, not allow to ignore, and the "active" in the male homosexuals, accounts for approximately 6 per cent of the sexually active males mass population, with the majority being young people with advanced degrees. Currently, the LGBT community is actively fighting for their legal rights. Still, China has little to say about the LGBT community other than that registration for same-sex marriages is not subject to any comments. On the legal front, China provides minimal protections for the LGBT community (Li, 2015). The Chinese do not appear to have a favourable or unfavourable opinion of the LGBT; their stance is neutral (Qu, 2015). According to the poll data of Ask, about 25 per cent of individuals have gay friends, more than 40 per cent support the love between gay people, and 38.2 per cent accept gay marriage. It appears that just a minority of individuals support gay marriage. According to the research, a big percentage of people find it repulsive (Ye, 2018). This can be the value disparity between the East and West. The Western world champions liberty and

equality, while traditional Chinese thinking emphasizes morality (Liu, Huang & Li, 2018).

I will return to China in July and will not be able to complete the entire research procedure at UoM (University of Manchester). All candidates will be current university students in China. Furthermore, because of summer vacation, July and August are the most excellent months to interview Chinese college students because I will have more opportunities to contact idle college students.

3. Literature Review

A survey of 321 heterosexual college students in China discovered that they were significantly more accepting of homosexuality than many LGBT people and legislators (Ye, 2018). Far from being anti-gay, most of them support the repeal of anti-homosexuality legislation. People with such tolerant attitudes are young, do not follow any religion, have gay friends, etc. College students from the new generation are growing more tolerant of increasing locations and communities, a fundamental tendency (Fu, 2012). As earlier surveys have demonstrated, the public's tolerance of LGBT has increased (Wang, 2018). Although people's attitudes toward LGBT have changed significantly, and homosexuals' self-evaluations have also improved considerably, it is evident that many people continue to hold an unfavourable view of LGBT (Liu, Huang & Li, 2018; Fu, 2012). Especially after it was recognized that homosexuals had a high chance of contracting AIDS, hostility towards homosexuality increased (Tang & Sun, 2014). International Times released an article titled "The Number of Chinese Students who have HIV Is Rising" on March 31, 2013. HIV infection is on the rise among young Chinese college students, and the ratio of the male-to-male transmission is undoubtedly on the rise. With 7,000 registered Chinese students living with HIV, AIDS has begun to threaten college campuses, with the LGBT population bearing the brunt of the impact. This has resulted in a worsening of the public's opinion and attitude toward homosexuality (Qu, 2015). Along with drug addiction, prostitution, and gambling, homosexuality has been labeled as a social ugly tag in some Chinese publications. This demonstrates that hostility and prejudice against LGBT people are not yet abolished (Liu, Huang & Li, 2018). Homophobia is still an enemy of reason (Ye, 2018), and it will only be defeated via the LGBT community's and the broader public's sustained efforts.

According to a study conducted by colleges and universities in Yunnan Province, a province in southern China, 64.3% of college students found it challenging to comprehend the LGBT community and its way of life, and 39.9% were concerned about the likelihood of HIV transmission among LGBT increasing. The statistics indicate that college students' subjective cognition and objective knowledge of the LGBT population are inconsistent, and their objective cognition is significantly lower than their emotional cognition (Ye, 2018). This demonstrates that college students who believe they know LGBT persons may lack a complete understanding and mastery of essential knowledge (Wang, 2018; Ye, 2018; Fu, 2012). Their knowledge of LGBT individuals is still inadequate and biased. In 2020, however, an online study of college students' attitudes toward THE LGBT community revealed that more than half said they understood the LGBT community and their way of life. Li (2013) also emphasized how diverse institutions, professional backgrounds, and geographies influence the perceptions and attitudes of college

students regarding the LGBT population.

4. Research Question

Aiming at filling the research gap and understanding more about the differences of students' views. I designed my research questions as follows:

1. How do Chinese college students perceive the LGBT community?
2. What can educational leaders do to improve attitudes towards the LGBT community in their colleges?

5. Research Design and Method

This paper is a qualitative research which will utilize eight semi-structured interviews with Chinese college students. Besides, this study is exploratory, with the expectation of gaining a profound understanding of the LGBT community from the perspective of Chinese college students. According to Blaikie (2007), the "what" is a descriptive research question, and the various replies will describe the features of multiple things. Qualitative methods are confirmed based on the subjectivity, diversity, and complexity of people's needs and experiences. It isn't easy to replace these data with numbers, while qualitative methods attach importance to subjectivity and flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Furthermore, qualitative methods allow me to obtain more detailed and in-depth data suited for exploratory research (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Interviews are a frequent and valuable strategy for collecting data in qualitative research (Braun and Clarke, 2013) when the research question seeks to comprehend and analyze the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives (Kvale, 2008). In addition, little previous research has investigated Chinese college students' perspectives on LGBT issues. Interviews can provide a rich and deep understanding of the perspectives of Chinese college students on LGBT groups, allowing for the emergence of new themes or concepts. Face-to-face interviews will serve as the data collection tool. I select face-to-face interviews because I can observe participants' body language, which will aid in identifying trends in qualitative research (Opdenakker, 2006). Additionally, body language reflects the interviewer's comfort and interest in the topic. We shall conduct semi-structured interviews since they permit flexibility and clarification of both interviewer and interviewee comments.

Ritchie (2014) believes that the smaller the sample size of qualitative research is, the larger the sample size is, which may bring more in-depth challenges to researchers. However, to ensure the diversity of the sample, Braun and Clarke (2013) recommend using subject analysis with at least 6 participants in the study. Therefore, the sample size of this study is 8. Because purposive and snowball Sampling is appropriate for selecting individuals with certain qualities to help answer research questions (Ritchie, 2014), I will utilize them to pick candidates from various classes, gender, and regional groupings. Because a semi-structured interview incorporates predefined and indeterminate questions based on the conversation (DiCiccoBloom & Crabtree, 2006), it gives the flexibility to address specific themes and hear personal anecdotes (Rabionet, 2011).

6. Method of Analysis

I will use the thematic analysis method to evaluate the data

received through interviews since it is suitable for discovering patterns in data (Braun&Clarke, 2006) and gives rich details. The purpose of thematic analysis is to identify, analyze and report on ways in qualitative research data (Raabionet, 2011). In addition to calculating phrases or words in the text, thematic analysis methods can also uncover prospective statements and obvious ideas in data (Gray, 2013). When establishing the theme, I will integrate participants' personal information to examine these themes in-depth and attempt to analyze the specific opinions of Chinese college students on the LGBT community and the influential factors. Consequently, this will assist me in comprehending the perspectives and attitudes of Chinese college students toward the LGBT population.

7. Ethical Issues

Following the lead of Creswell and Crewswell's 2018 work,

I will not begin data collection until I have received IRB approval. To protect my participants' rights, I will deliver the task consent in person, notifying them of the goal of my study, the potential use of their data, and their rights surrounding volunteer involvement. In selecting respondents, I knew we would send out consent forms again and ask them if they would like to proceed to the next stage. I will inform them of their right to stop and destroy data and record interviews using ethical recording technology. Interview questions that are too personal should be avoided. If an interview question made a participant feel uneasy, the interview was terminated. Because confidentiality is critical, I will keep their involvement private and replace any identities and information, such as name codes. After finishing my work, the data will be securely saved and removed.

8. Timeline

Date	Task
May 26	Finish and submit dissertation proposal and ethics application
June 1	Finish and submit literature review draft
June 10	Discuss with supervisor about literature review and interview design
June 17	Conduct first stage research, collect and review data
June 24	Design interview questions and discuss with supervisor
June 30	Start conducting interview and writing the dissertation
August 1	Finish and send the dissertation draft to supervisor
August 15	Finalize and ready to submit dissertation.
August 27	Finish and submit dissertation

9. The Reflective Commentary

When I was in college in China, I had friends from the LGBT community. These friends expressed concern about what other students thought of them in daily conversations. I've been studying in the United Kingdom for about a year, and I've found that the LGBT community is well-documented and that the government pays great attention to the educational environment of this population. However, literature on this subject in China is scarce and poor in variety. School leaders' educational responsibilities to the LGBT community were also rarely mentioned. So, that's why I did my research. In fact, I wanted to find out some specific geographical characteristics of Chinese students' views on the LGBT community, but after discussing them with my supervisor. I find it very complicated because China is so large and geographically diverse. Considering the time and workload constraints, I decided to design my thesis as an exploratory study to help me learn more about Chinese college students' attitudes and discover some exciting diversity. I hope this exploratory research can help me build a solid basic understanding of this topic and support my further study.

9.1. The Strengths and Limitations

There are several strengths. Few studies have focused on the attitudes of Chinese college students towards the LGBT community. This paper is an effective introduction to the perspectives of contemporary Chinese college students. It provides a good summary, stating the theme of this research and clarifying its purpose. In addition, research questions are closely related to research gaps and personal experience. Many scholars insist that the gap can confirm this research problem (Robson and McMcartan, 2016). It is reasonable to

link literature reviews with papers (Oliver, 2012). The design and methodology of the paper provide some basis for the choice of methodology. It explains why qualitative methods and subject analysis were developed step by step. Some literature is used to support claims and avoid personal opinions. In addition, the timeline has a good understanding of the paper's time management.

Nevertheless, there are some limitation. First, it's a general study of research findings. Qualitative studies cannot show the available views of the whole population (Robson and McCartan, 2016). The views of the eight respondents cannot be considered representative of the large group of Chinese college students. The responses of students are based on their personal experiences and thoughts. Due to their subjectivity, they may be biased (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Secondly, few references to school leaders' treatment of the LGBT community. It isn't easy to analyze and discuss what role leadership should play in China and how to play it. In China's higher education system, school leaders do not now pay attention to LGBT concerns (Ye, 2018), making it difficult to comprehend their attitudes and perspectives. Additionally, given their relationship with the interviewer, participants are likely to conceal some of their genuine thoughts. After all, I am the same age as the participants. Based on my personal experience, some college students may be afraid to declare what they genuinely think because they are typically very concerned with what their peers say (Liu, Huang & Li, 2018). For instance, they have negative attitudes toward the LGBT population but fear that researchers will judge them as rude and disrespectful, so they conceal their genuine opinions.

9.2. The Challenge

Because I will be collecting first-hand data for my paper, Qu (2015) argues that qualitative research takes time. To

guarantee that I accomplish my tasks on time, I will rigorously adhere to the timeline of my research plan during my research. Another challenge is that exploratory inquiry necessitates higher research skills from researchers (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Because my research background is from a Chinese institution, I will devote more effort to becoming acquainted with the educational environment of Chinese universities and college students' perspectives regarding the LGBT community. This requires higher transcription and analysis skills, which I need to improve. After I finish the transcribing and analysis, I will review it with my supervisor and seek more suggestions for changes.

9.3. Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

To increase reliability, I shall implement the following measures. Before collecting data, pilot tests will be administered. Pilot tests improve validity and dependability (Cresswell and Cresswell, 2018; Opdenakker, 2006). Conduct brief interviews with multiple individuals and have them articulate their comprehension of the interview questions in light of the research question. Following the pilot, the interview and interview questions will be adjusted to increase reliability. Respondents may have varied conceptions of the LGBT community; therefore, this definition will be presented at the interview's outset. The interviewer will avoid appearing biased during the interview and ask leading questions to boost the candidate's reliability.

Many researchers believe that interview questions should be closely related to research questions to increase their validity. In addition, interview questions and subjects should be pertinent to the study issue.

Several principles will be utilized to boost my trustworthiness. When writing literary evaluations, arguments must be supported by evidence and reason (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I shall adhere to the university's ethical policies and abide by its regulations. I ask my mentor rather than relying on my instincts when faced with difficult questions. In the methods section, sufficient detail will be provided, and the concepts of each method will be thoroughly defined. The outcomes will be based on raw facts, not assumptions and opinions of the authors.

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